A Syriac Version of the Letters of Lentulus and Pilate

The two short pseudepigraphical texts, the *Letter of Publius Lentulus to the Senate* and the *Letter of Pilate to Claudius*, published here (1), are both taken from Mingana syr. 47, a modern manuscript copied at Alqosh in 1907 by the well known scribe Abraham Shikwānā. The manuscript contains matter of varied content, and includes (ff. 51^{b}-109^{b}) the *Synodicon Orientale*. According to the colophon (f. 239^{a}) the text was copied from an old manuscript of AG 1610 (= AD 1398/9), but this cannot refer to all the contents (2), least of all to the *Letters of Lentulus* and *Pilate*,

(1) I take the opportunity to thank the Reverend Professor W. D. McHardy, Curator of the Mingana Collection (Selly Oak Colleges Library, Birmingham, England), for permission to publish these texts.

(2) Perhaps only to the *Synodicon Orientale*; for this work the *Vorlage* of Mingana Syr. 47 was almost certainly Alqosh ms. 169. Scher, however, (who compiled his catalogue during a visit to the monastery in the summer of 1902) failed to find any date given in this manuscript, and merely listed it as ' antérieure au XIV^{e} siècle ', which Vosté quotes without comment in his *Catalogue de la Bibliothèque Syro-Chaldéene du Couvent de Notre-Dame des Semences près d'Alqosh (Iraq)*, p. 66. Alqosh ms 169 was the source for all manuscripts of the *Synodicon* in western libraries (Vat. Borg. 82 of mid 19th century; Vat. Syr. 598 of 1871; Paris Syr. 332 of 1895; Mingana Syr. 598 of 1932). According to the colophon of Paris Syr. 332 (printed in Cabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 11-12) the only other manuscript of the *Synodicon* in the East, beside Alqosh ms. 169, was one in the Monastery of St. Jacob the Recluse (near Seert), which the scribe of Paris Syr. 332 had seen in 1883. This was presumably Seert ms 65, of 17th-18th century (which in 1903 was used to fill up certain gaps in Alqosh ms 169, see Vosté, p. 66). According to Mingana, *Woodbroke Studies* II, p. 15, Seert ms 65 was also — at least in part — derived from Alqosh ms 169. Note further Mardin ms. 49.

which, as will be seen below, were only translated into Syriac, from Arabic, shortly before 1907.

The two letters occur on f. 45[a-b] and ff. 45[b]-46[a] respectively of Mingana syr. 47, and they are also to be found in Alqosh (Notre Dame des Moissons [Semences]) ms 326, ff. 97-100[a], for which the entry in Vosté's *Catalogue* (p. 117) reads: " 5. Lettres apocryphes de Publius et de Ponce Pilate au sujet du Christ, traduites de l'arabe en chaldéen par le moine Habel Kedra de 'Aïnkawa ". This Alqosh manuscript is undated, but is must be roughly contemporary with Mingana syr. 47 since it contains both a *madrāšā* on the R. P. Paul the Persian († 1892) composed by Abraham Shikwānā, the scribe of the Mingana manuscript, and a *turgāmā* written by another priest in 1896.

The translator, Habel Kedra (1), was born at 'Ainqawa at an unknown date, and joined the novitiate of the Antonines of St Hormizdas on 7th Jan 1876. He was ordained priest at Mosul on 10th June 1895 and, before retiring to the monastery of Notre Dame des Moissons, was parish priest at 'Ainqawa. He died 23rd May 1919. Of his literary activity the notice in the register of the monastery of Notre Dame des Moissons mentions a translation from Arabic into Syriac of the ' Book of the Vanities of the world ' (cf. Vosté, *Catalogue* nos 280-283), a work of ultimate Western origin, by the Franciscan Diego de Estella (first published 1562). Nothing, however, is said of the present two short texts.

With these preliminaries I turn to the texts themselves.

A. The Letter of Lentulus

Although the Syriac text bears the title ' *Letter of Publius...* ' (2), it is none other than the famous medieval *Letter of Lentulus* (Publius Lentulus in some manuscripts), giving a description of Christ's physical appearance.

(1) I assume that the Syriac translation of the Letters in Mingana Syr. 47 is Habel Kedra's too: my attempts to obtain a collation of the Letters in Alqosh ms 326 have been unsuccessful.

For the following details on Habel Kedra I am endebted to the kindness of R. P. J.M. Fiey, O. P.

(2) *Bwblyws*, thus betraying the Arabic origin of the Syriac.

This Letter has hitherto been known only in numerous Latin manuscripts and daughter versions from the Latin. The Latin text has been excellently edited by von Dobschütz in his monumental *Christusbilder. Untersuchungen zur christlichen Legende* (1). None of the Latin manuscripts is earlier than the fourteenth century, and von Dobschütz considered the letter to be a medieval work, and Latin the original language (2), circulating first anonymously, and then (first *ap.* Laurentius Valla) (3) attributed to Lentulus, or, in certain manuscripts, Publius Lentulus.

Of oriental versions of the Latin, von Dobschütz mentions only a Persian one, to be found in Hieronymus Xavier's *Historia Christi Persice* (4). There is however, also an Armenian translation from the Latin, which can best be found in *T'angaran haykakan hin ew nor dpruteanç*, II, *Ankanon girk' nor ktakaranaç* (Venice 1898), pp. 381-2. Both the Persian and the Armenian adhere closely to the Latin.

The Syriac version, although it obviously represents basically the same document as the *Letter of Lentulus*, contains a considerable number of variations, both qualitative and quantitative, from the Latin (which, in contrast, has a comparatively stable tradition). The problems for the origin of the Syriac version that are raised by this state of affairs are discussed below pp. 51-55. In order to bring out clearly the differences, the translation of the Syriac below is juxtaposed with the Latin, taken from von Dobschütz, p. 319**.

(1) *Texte und Untersuchungen* XVIII (nf III), 1899, pp. 308**-330**.

(2) *Op. cit.*, p. 329.

(3) Cf. L. VALLA, *Treatise on the Donation of Constantine* (ed. C. B. Coleman, New York, 1922), p. 142: utinamque tam vera esset epistola nomine Lentuli missa de effigie Christi, quae non minus improbe ementita est quam privilegium quod confutavimus.

(4) *Historia Christi Persice, Latine reddita et animadversionibus notata a Ludovico de Dieu; conscripta simulque multis modis contaminata a P. Hieronymo Xavier, S.J.* (Leiden, 1639), pp. 532-5. The Latin translation of the *Lentulus Letter* in Xavier's book can conveniently be found in J. A. FABRICIUS, *Codex Apocryphus Novi Testamenti* (Hamburg, edn. 1, 1703; edn. 2, 1719), I, p. 301 f.

ܘܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܡܪܝ ܫܠܡ ܠܟ ܘܐܬܪ ܠܟ ܒܫܠܡܐ ܘܐܬ ܒܥܐ ܠܡܫܡܫ ܒܗ ܒܟܠ ܡܕܡ ܕܐܬ ܒܥܐ ܠܡܫܡܫ ܒܗ

Latin(1)	*Syriac*
[For the various titles in the Latin mss (none identical with the Syriac), see von Dobschütz, pp. 316**ff.]	Now the letter of Publius (Bwblyws), governor (ἡγεμών) of Judaea, to the Senate (σύγκλητος) of Rome, which he wrote and sent in the lifetime and days of Christ our Lord.
Apparuit temporibus istis et adhuc est homo magnae virtutis nominatus Jhesus Christus, qui dicitur a gentibus propheta veritatis, quem eius discipuli vocant filium Dei, suscitans mortuos et sanans [omnes] languores,	To-day there is to be seen in the region of Judaea a certain man outstanding for the time and excellent in (his) way of life, and his name is Jesus Christ. And the Jews consider him a prophet, but his disciples and those who believe in him consider him the Son of God, the Essence who descended from heaven. And behold he raises the dead and cleanses the lepers and heals the sick and cures the afflicted by the word of his mouth and the touch of his hand.
homo quidem procerus mediocris et spectabilis vultum habens venerabilem, quem possent intuentes diligere et formidare, capillos habens coloris nucis avellane prematuré [*et*] planos fere usque ad aures, ab auribus [*vero*] circinos crispos aliquantulum ceruliores et fulgentiores, ab humeris ventilantes, discrimen habens in medio	And this man is tall of stature and fair in build and pleasant of speech and beautiful in appearance and looks. And he has hair on his head which I am unable to compare with anything: very long and covering his shoulders, and divided on the top of his

(1) I give the text as von Dobschütz prints it: for the apparatus criticus reference should be made to his edition.

capitis iuxta morem Nazareorum,
frontem planam et serenissimam cum facie sine ruga et macula [*aliqua*], quam rubor [*moderatus*] venustat; nasi et oris
nulla prorsus [*est*] reprehensio;
barbam habens
copiosam [*et impuberem*] capillis concolorem, non longam sed in mento (*medio*) [parum] bifurcatum;
aspectum
habens simplicem et maturum,
oculis glaucis variis et
claris existentibus;
in increpatione terribilis,
in admonitione blandus et amabilis, hilaris servata gravitate;
qui nunquam visus
est ridere, flere autem sic,

in statura corporis propagatus et rectus, manus habens et brachia visu delectabilia, in colloquio gravis rarus et modestus,

speciosus
inter filios hominum.

head
and it is red in colour.

And his nose
and mouth and lips are sweet and very beautiful.
He has a beard

divided into two parts, and its colour is like the hair of his head; its length from the bottom of the chin is about a finger's length.

And his eyes are beautiful and flashing and clear and sparkling, reproving with gentleness,
and ? (1) with simplicity;
and all he says or does, he performs pleasantly and with discernment. And he has never been seen to laugh at all, but very frequently is he seen weeping. And he is in the consummation of grief and shame and prudence (*sic!*).

In all, this man is amazing and exalted in good qualities, and very much perfected in all virtues and in godly gifts, and he is superior to all men in his deeds.

(1) Ms ' sweeps away ', which can hardly be correct. ܡܚܢܕ is probably a corruption of ܡܚܢܕ ' disputes ', or (less close palaeographically, but *cf* Latin *admonitione*) ܡܚܢܚ ' admonishes '.

Of the more striking differences between the two versions, attention should be drawn to the statement that Jesus was considered a 'prophet' by the gentiles in Lat., but by the Jews in Syr. The latter is the statement one would expect, and it would seem that the change was made out of anti-Jewish feeling; the reverse process however is also possible. The list of Jesus' deeds is much fuller in Syr., but perhaps borrowed from the *Letter of Pilate to Claudius*. On the other hand Syr. omits any description of Jesus' face as awe-inspiring, and for Lat.'s *in increpatione terribilis* Syr. provides 'reproving with gentleness'. The description of Jesus' hair is considerably longer in Lat., and at the same time there are important differences, such as over the colour, and Syr. omits any mention of the parting of the hair in the middle as being *iuxta morem Nazareorum*. Syr has nothing on Jesus' spotless and rosy countenance, but provides an interesting addition on the length of Jesus' beard, which has its closest parallel in the Revelation of St Birgitta (1): *longitudo barbe palmo per transversum manus*. It should be noted that Syr., unlike Lat., specifically mentions the lips, which also feature in St. Birgitta's description (2). At the close of the Letter Lat. and Syr. part company quite considerably.

It seems that in Syr. several features have been idealised. Thus Lat. gives Jesus' height as *procerus mediocris* (3), while Syr. has 'tall of stature' (4). Syr. also lays more stress on his moral character (e.g. at the end of the Letter).

The appearance of the *Letter of Lentulus* in Syriac, in a form considerably different from the Latin, poses a problem, for, while the immediate provenance of the Syriac is clearly Arabic, whence did the Arabic derive? Moreover, an Arabic version of both the *Letter of Lentulus* and the *Letter of Pilate to Claudius* was quite unknown to Graf (5), and the only description of Christ's appearance to be found in Arabic that I know of is from a quite different

(1) von Dobschütz, p. 307**.

(2) For a possible explanation of these points of contact, see below.

(3) Perhaps due to the old tradition that Jesus was very short; eg ORIGEN, *Contra Celsum* VI. 75.

(4) A regular feature of any idealised description: cp, from a wide range of literature, I Sam. ix 2 (Saul); HERODOTOS VII 187 (Xerxes); *Chron. anon. ad annum 1234* (ed. Chabot) II, p. 145[10] (Baudouin II).

(5) *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur.*

source: Mingana, in Vol. II (p. 138) of his *Catalogue of the Mingana Collection*, drew attention to a passage in a 'History of the Blessed Virgin', ascribed to 'St Epiphanius the presbyter' (1). The extract reads as follows (Mingana's translation):

His face was beautiful, as the prophet David declared 'He was fairer than the children of men' (Ps xlv 2), and so also was his stature. He had perfect legs, and red hair which was not very thick, but its curling was natural. The colour of his eyebrows was black, and they were not unduly arched. His eyes were of a dark-blue colour, and their glance expressed joy, like the description of David his forefather, who was of a red colour and characterised by beautiful eyes. In this way He (Christ) was of good appearance. His nose was aquiline, his beard red, and the hair of his head luxuriant and long. No razor had ever come near his head, and no man's hand, except that of his mother at the time of his babyhood. His neck was slightly bent, and thus his stature was not very tall, straight and erect. His colour was golden brown, and his face was not round, but, like that of his mother, it was slightly inclining to be long.

This text is in fact an Arabic translation of Epiphanius the monk's *Life of Mary*, and the Greek text of this description of Jesus' appearance is printed in von Dobschütz, p. 302** (2).

As far as the *Letter of Lentulus* is concerned, then, there are two main possibilities. First, that both the Latin and the Syriac/Arabic go back to a common lost Greek original, such as has already been posited for the Latin by some (3), though denied by von Dobschütz. (A Greek origin is indeed implied by the obscure subscription in one of the Latin *Lentulus* manuscripts) (4). The alternative explanation is that the Syriac/Arabic letter is simply a reworking — with the help of other documents, such as the

(1) Mingana Chr. Arab. 85 (= *Catalogue*, II, no. 96); dated 4th Feb. AM 7151 = 1643.

(2) For details on this Epiphanius (fl. c. 800), see von Dobschütz, p. 303**; H. G. BECK, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich* (Munich, 1959), p. 513.

(3) In particular R. EISLER, Ἰησοῦς Βασιλεὺς οὐ Βασιλεύσας (Heidelberg, 1929/30), II, pp. 344-6; cp. J. E. WEIS-LIEBERSDORF, *Christus und Apostelbilder* (1902), p. 52.

(4) Iena Elect. f. 76 = von Dobschütz's e^1; see von Dobschütz, p. 329**.

St Birgitta vision (1) — of the Latin *Lentulus Letter*, made by some western missionary in Mesopotamia in the 18th or 19th century (2). Of these, the second is perhaps the most likely explanation, but the marked differences between the Syriac and the Latin do not make this choice as easy as it might be.

A more thorough analysis of the whole problem would be out of place here, and indeed beyond my competence. Nevertheless it is worth pointing to one line of research that might well prove helpful in this context, namely a comparison of the data given in the *Letter* with actual portraitures of Christ in art, for the Lentulus description was no doubt based on some venerated icon, and then, once it had been put into writing, the description will in turn have had considerable influence on later portraiture of Christ (3). In point of fact it seems very possible that the model may actually have been the Abgar portrait (or a derivative) (4), as was long ago hinted at by Holtzmann (5).

(1) Cp above, p. 51, for possible contacts.

(2) Is is well known that many Western devotional works were translated into Syriac and Arabic in this way.

(3) The influence of the *Letter* on later iconography has never, to my knowledge, been systematically studied by art historians; cp. the general remarks in K. KÜNSTLE, *Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst* (Freiburg i.B., 1928), I, p. 613. Its influence is very obviously to be seen in, for example, Piero della Francesca's *Baptism* and *Resurrection*; likewise (and, it seems, especially) in the 15th century art of the Netherlands and Germany, as has occasionally been pointed out (thus H. PREUSS, *Das Bild Christi im Wandel der Zeiten* (Leipzig, 1915), p. 10 and esp. pp. 62-3 [on J. VAN EYCK's *Christ as King of Kings*]; cp. also C. M. J. H. I. SMITS, *De Iconografie van de nederlandsche Primitieven* (Amsterdam, 1933), p. 11).

(4) On this icon, see especially VON DOBSCHÜTZ, *op. cit.*, Ch. V. "Das Christusbild von Edessa"; for its later fate, *ibid.*, p. 178 ff., and S. RUNCIMAN, 'Some remarks on the Image of Edessa', *Cambridge Historical Journal*, 3 (1931), p. 238 ff. I have been unable to see von Dobschütz's further study, in *Monatschrift für Gottesdienst und kirchliche Kunst*, XIV (1909).

(5) 'Zur Entwicklung des Christusbildes der Kunst', *Jahrbuch für protest. Theologie*, 10 (1884), p. 116. Holtzmann points out that the Lentulus description agrees closely with one of the supposed Abgar portraits, that of San Silvestro in Rome (illustrated, eg., in K. PEARSON, *Die Fronika* (Strassburg, 1887), plate I (right)). One might add that the same applies to another claimant, that of St Bartolommeo degli Armeni in Genoa (cp L. CUST and E. VON DOBSCHÜTZ, 'Notes on

To illustrate this, I take what is perhaps the most distinguishing feature of the Lentulus description, the divided beard, and here I merely point out the scattered nature of the material. The earliest occurrences known to me come, interestingly enough, from Syria, and belong to the sixth century (1). It is, however, only at the end of the tenth century (2) that this feature becomes at all common — and, at the same time, very widespread: examples are to be found both in the East (3) and in the West (4). In connection with what has been said above, about the possible model for the Lentulus description, this date becomes significant when one remembers that it was in 944 that the Abgar icon was translated, amid great pomp and ceremony, from Edessa to the Byzantine capital, Constantinople, and when one also recalls that a divided beard was one of the distinctive features of the Abgar *mandili* (5).

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pictures in Royal Collections, III. The Likeness of Christ', *Burlington Magazine*, 1904, pp. 517 ff., and plate II).

(1) Notable examples to be found on the Emesa silver vase, in the Louvre; and in the Rabbula Gospels (of 586), eg. f. 13b.

(2) An isolated early Western example can be found in an 8th century Irish manuscript at Würzburg (illustrated in P. THOBY, *Le Crucifix des origines au concil de Trente* (1959, Supplément 1963). Pl. XI, no 24).

(3) Examples covering a wide geographical range include: 11th/12th century icon of crucifixion, on Sinai (= WEITZMANN *et al.*, *Früher Ikonen* (Wien/München, 1965), Pl. 21); Walters Art Gallery ms 530e (Christ's appearance to the disciples, in a 14th century Gospels fragment = *Walters Art Gallery: Early Christian and Byzantine Art* (1947), n. 735); Epitaphios of Milutin Ureš, c. 1300 (= P. JOHNSTONE, *The Byzantine Tradition in Church Embroidery* (London 1967; pl. 94). Also found in 11th century Cappadocia (eg Kiss of Judas, in Elmale Kilise), and in Armenia: eg 12th century Armenian Gospels in Freer Art Gallery, 50.3 (Transfiguration = S. der Nersessian, *Armenian Manuscripts in the Freer Gallery of Art (1963), Pl. 9*); Gospels of 1211, Matenadaran no. 6288 (Christ's entry to Jerusalem = L. A. DOURNOVO, *Miniatures arméniennes* (1960), p. 83), etc.

(4) Very marked in the Beatus Apocalypse of 975 (eg THOBY, *op. cit.* Pl. CXCIII, no 398); BM Harley 2904 (Psalter of Winchester school, end of 10th century, = Thoby, Pl. XIII, no 29); Paris BN Lat. 943 (Pontifical of Canterbury School, end of 10th century, = Thoby, Pl. XIV, no 30). For the 11th and 12th centuries eg: Salzburg Gospels, Arundel Psalter (both 11th century), Brunswick Cathedral Crucifix (of c. 1160, after the Volto Santo, Lucca), etc.

(5) See A. GRABAR, 'La tradition des masques du Christ dans l'orient chrétien', *Archives alsaciennes d'histoire de l'art*, II (1923), p. 1 ff.

If the supposition that the Lentulus description is based on a copy of the Abgar *mandili* is correct, this would further help to explain the clear — if distant — connections between the *Letter* and Byzantine traditions of Christ's physical appearance (1). On the other hand it does not offer any help for the discussion of our more immediate concern, the origin of the Syriac form of the *Letter*, for any agreements between the *Letter's* description and actual depictions of Christ in Syriac (Christian Arabic) tradition (2) need not necessarily imply dependence on the *Letter* (thus providing a *terminus ante quem* for the appearance of the Syriac-Arabic form of the *Letter*), since the similarities could just as well be explained by supposing the influence of a native tradition of iconography, independent of the *Letter*, and stemming directly from the *mandili* itself.

B. The Letter of Pilate to Claudius

In Mingana syr. 47 the *Letter of Lentulus* is followed immediately by that of *Pilate to Claudius*, and it is worth noting that a number of Latin manuscripts of the *Letter of Lentulus* also contain the *Letter of Pilate to Claudius* (3). This might tend to confirm the supposition that the two letters in Syriac have an ultimate origin in the Latin West.

Grabar shows how the Sainte Face of Laon (an icon of eastern origin, c. 1200) goes back to the Abgar *mandili*, which itself may have been a work of the sixth century — the time when, as it has been pointed out above, the divided beard made its first appearance, precisely in Syrian art.

(1) Cp W. Grimm, 'Die Sage vom Ursprung der Christusbilder', in *Kleinere Schriften* (ed. G. Hinrichs), III (Berlin, 1883), pp. 183-4.

(2) To take again just the feature of the divided beard; this occurs in the following Syriac illuminated manuscripts: Vat. Syr. 559 (eg Incredulity of Thomas = J. Leroy, *Les Manuscrits syriaques à peintures* (1964), Pl. 94[1]), of 1219/20 from Bartelli; BM Add. 7170 (eg Ascension = Leroy, Pl. 95[1]) of c. 1220 and from same region (?); Jerusalem St Mark ms 6 (eg Crucifixion = Leroy, Pl. 100[2]) of 1221 from Edessa; BM Add. 7169 (eg Resurrection of Lazarus = Leroy, Pl. 121[2]) of 12th/13th century; Vat. Borg. 169 (eg Entry to Jerusalem = Leroy, Pl. 145[1]) of 16th century, Alqosh school.

(3) See von Dobschütz, p. 316**.

The *Letter of Pilate to Claudius* is, however, a document of more respectable antiquity (1), and is to be found, in somewhat varying forms, in a number of different contexts:

(i) as §§ 19-21 of the *Passio Petri et Pauli* (Latin, with one Greek manuscript; Lipsius-Bonnet, *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha*, I, pp. 134-8).

(ii) as §§ 40-42 of the *Acta Petri et Pauli* (Greek; Lipsius-Bonnet, *op. cit.*, I. pp. 196-7) (2).

(iii) as §§ XIII (XXIX) of the Latin *Acta Pilati* (in certain manuscripts only: Tischendorf, *Evangelia Apocrypha*^{2}, pp. 413-6).

(iv) as § 16 of the *Cura Sanitatis Tiberii* (a work largely dependent on the preceding; on it see von Dobschütz, *op. cit.*, pp. 156**-203** (text of the letter is to be found on pp. 184**-187**)).

Problems of the Letter's original context and language (3) cannot be dealt with here. It should be noted in passing that there is also an Armenian version of the Letter, which is translated from the Greek (4); it is not surprising, then, to find that its text agrees closely with that of the Greek *Acta Petri et Pauli* (5).

Comparing the form of the Letter in the four sources listed above, it will be seen that while (i)-(iii) are comparatively close to each other, (iv) on the other hand provides a version that has been fairly drastically reworked, and the same also applies to the form of the Letter given by Sixtus Senensis (6). The Syriac, however, goes considerably further in this direction and provides a highly individual recension of the Letter, and one that has little apparent connection with any of the Latin on Greek forms, (least of all with (iv) and Sixtus Senensis).

(1) For the old tradition that the crucifixion took place under Claudius, see BAUER in *New Testament Apocrypha* (ed. Hennecke-Schneelmelcher) E. T., I, pp. 433-4.

(2) The relationship between (i) and (ii) is highly problematic, see *New Testament Apocrypha*, II, p. 573.

(3) Von Dobschütz and Bonnet claimed Latin; see von Dobschütz, p. 200**.

(4) This is clear from the mistranslation of ἔναγχος (Latin *nuper*) by *dšndak* ' painful ' at the beginning of the *Letter*.

(5) The Armenian is printed in *T'angaran...*, II, pp. 379-80 (for full title, see p. 47).

(6) See TISCHENDORF, *op. cit.*, p. lxxvii, and his apparatus *ad loc.*

To bring out the individuality of the Syriac the translation of the *Letter of Pilate to Claudius* is juxtaposed with the Latin of the Letter in the *Passio Petri et Pauli*. To the Latin I have appended a select apparatus (iv, however, is only quoted where of relevance to the Syriac). In the apparatus the following symbols are employed:

A (= text) = *Passio Petri et Pauli* §§ 19-21 (for sources see above). A^{gk} = Greek text of the *Passio*, printed in Lipsius-Bonnet, *loc. cit.*

B = *Acta Petri et Pauli* §§ 40-42.

C = *Acta Pilati* § XIII (XXIX).

(Tischendorf's text is not satisfactory, and I cite throughout the readings of his manuscript D^{b}, which must be sought for in his apparatus).

D = *Cura Sanitatis Tiberii*, § 16.

Suparalineal letters represent manuscripts of the work in question: the symbols employed are those of the respective editors, and for details the editions themselves should be consulted.

45b

ܐܓܪܬܐ ܕܦܝܛܝܘܣ ܦܝܠܛܘܣ ܠܩܠܘܕܝܘܣ ܩܣܪ ܗܘ ܐܬܬܝܗܒ . ܗܘ
ܩܪܝܒ . ܐܡ ܩܪܝܬ ܥܡܠ ܐܝܟܢܐ ܟܬܝܒ ܥܡ
ܥܡܘܗܝ ܥܡܐ ܕܐܡܪ ̇ ܐܡܪ ܗܘ . ܟܕ ܐܬܐ ܩܪܝܒ
ܩܪܝܒ ܐܝܟ ܥܡܠ ܐܬܪܐ . ܐܝܟ ܥܡܐ ܕܐܡܪ
ܠ ܐܬܐ . ܐܝܟ ܥܡܐ ܕܐܡܪ ̇ ܐܡܪ ܗܘ . ܐܝܟ
ܘܐܠܐ ܐܝܟ . ܐܡܪ ̇ ܐܡܪ ̇ ܐܡܪ ̇ ܐܡܪ ̇ ܐܡܪ ̇ ܐܡܪ ̇
ܐܢ ܐܬܪܐ . ܥܡܠ ܐܝܟ ̇ ܐܡܪ ̇ ܐܡܪ ̇ ܐܡܪ ̇ ܐܡܪ ̇ ܐܡܪ ̇
ܡ ̇ ܐܝܟ ̇ ̇ ̇

(made) known to you recently
that the Jews delivered up
Jesus through envy,
and have sentenced him to death
unjustly, because their God said

through the mouth of their prophets that he would send them his son

to be born of a virgin.

And he sent him to Judaea where I was governor, and I heard that he was opening the eyes of the blind, and cleansing lepers, and healing paralytics, and giving health to the sick, and driving out demons from men, and raising the dead by the power of his authority, walking on the waves of the sea, and performing wonderful miracles and doing great wonders. Because of this, great crowds of Jews believed in him, that he was the son of the living God. But the Pharisees and scribes and the priests of the Jews were envious of him, and

accidit[c] quod ipse probavi,
Iudaeos per invidiam se suosque posteros[d] crudeli condemnatione punisse.

denique cum promissum haberent[e] patres eorum quod

illis deus eorum[f] mitteret [g]de caelo sanctum suum[g], qui eorum rex merito diceretur, et hunc se promiserit[h] per virginem missurum ad terras.

Is itaque me praeside in Iudaea Hebraeorum deus cum venisset[i], et vidissent[j] eum caecos inluminasse, leprosos mundasse, paralyticos curasse[k], daemones ab hominibus fugasse, mortuos suscitasse[l], imperasse ventis, ambulasse siccis pedibus[m] super undas maris, et multa alia mirabilia[n] fecisse:

cum omnis populus[o] Iudaeorum
dei filium hunc esse dicerent[p] invidia
contra eum ducti sunt principes sacerdotum[q] et
tenuerunt eum et mihi tradide-

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[d] + iesum A^{F1} (cp Syr; Tischendorf p. 413). [e] α μελλει απηγγελκαν αυτοις A^{Gk}; αμελει επαγγελιας εχοντες B. [f] *om* B. [g-g] τον αγιον αυτου ε; ουρανου B Arm. [h] επηγγειλαντο A^{Gk} [i] mississet A^{BCD} C. [j] audissent A^{G1} (cp. Syr, where '*I* heard' could go back to a Greek *ηκουον). [k] + auctoritate A^{1} (cp. Syr). [l] + male habentes verbo sanabat D (cp. Syr above). [m] *om* B Arm (cp Syr). [n] signa miraculorum C. [o] multi de populo C. [p] crederent C (cp. Syr); adfirmarent D. [q] + scribae et Pharisaei Iudaeorum C (cp. Syr).

accused him of many things and spoke against him (saying) that 'he is a magician, and by the chief of the demons he casts out demons'; and they considered him to be dissolving their law. And they seized him and delivered him into my hands, and set up false witnesses against him, and they said, 'this man annuls our law and our religion (1), and prevents us from paying the poll tax to Caesar, and makes himself king'. And I Pilate, when I saw that they testified against him on many matters, believed them and I scourged him and delivered him into their hands, so that they could do with him everything they wanted in accordance with their law. But they crucified him on a cross, and he died. And they set guards at his tomb. But on the third day he arose from the tomb while the guards were guarding it. But the wicked Jews gave the guards no small bribe so that they should testify

runt et alia pro aliis mihi de eo mentientes dixerunt, istum magum esse et

contra legem eorum agere.

ego autem[r]

credidi ita esse et flagellatum tradidi illum arbitrio eorum.

illi autem crucifixerunt eum[s] et sepulto[t] custodes adhibuerunt[u]. [v]ille autem militibus meis custodientibus die tertio resurrexit[v]. in tantum eutem exarsit nequitia[w] Iudaeorum ut darent pecuniam[x] eis[y] dicentes: Dicite

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(1) Syr *dīnan*. For *dīna* in this sense (= Arabic *dīn* Iranian *daena* cp. already *History of Mar Abha* (ed Bedjan), p. 254[3]: *maguše mahpek a(n)t men din w-'abed lhon krestyane*; cp also *Chron. Anon.* (ed. Guidi) p. 23[12].

[r] + verbis eorum C. [s] + in ligno C (cp. Syr [lit. 'wood']). [t] mortuum sepelientes C (cp. Syr). [u] posuerunt C. [v-v] militibus praetorii mei monumentum eius custodientibus et signantibus (ms -tes) monumentum die tertia resurrexit de monumento C. [w] iniquitas C. [x] (αργυρια) ικανα B^{1P} (cp Syr). [y] τοις στρατιωταις A^{gk} B; militibus meis C (custodibus C^{Dc} (cp. Syr)).

and say that 'his disciples stole him by night while we were asleep'.

But they were unable to hide concerning the truth, and they openly revealed it and said that ' he has risen from the tomb '.

Because of this I made certain of the matter and I have written by my own hands, and I have made known these occurrences as having taken place thus, in order that no one should inform you (pl.) otherwise and (that they should not) relate them after the false story of the deceitful Jews.

Given in Jerusalem by Pilate the governor.

quia discipuli eius[z] corpus ipsius[aa] rapuerunt[bb].
sed[cc] cum accepissent pecuniam, [dd]quid factum fuerit tacere non potuerunt[dd]. [ee]nam et illum resurrexisse testati sunt se vidisse, et a Judaeis pecuniam accepisse[ee].

haec ideo

ingessi[ff]

ne quis aliter mentiatur,

et existimes credendum mendaciis Iudaeorum[gg]

There is, unfortunately, nothing conclusive to show from which language, Latin or Greek, Syr. ultimately derives. For a possible point in favour of Greek, see note *j* to the apparatus; on the other hand, Syr has some fairly close textual affinities at times with the form of the Letter in the Latin *Acta Pilati* (C).

As with the *Letter of Lentulus*, then, it does not seem to me that the origin of the Syriac of the *Letter of Pilate to Claudius* can be established with any real certainty, for once again the form of

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[z] + ελθοντες δια νυκτος A^{gk} B^{P}; nocte A^{M} D; pernoctem C (cp Syr). [aa] + ημων κοιμουμενων A^{HM} B^{IP} D (cp. Syr). [bb] εκλεψαν A^{gk} B C (cp. Syr). [cc] milites autem mei C. [dd-dd] tacere veritatem non potuerunt quod factum fuerat C (cp Syr). [ee-ee] sed de sepulcro resurrexisse testificati et a Iudaeis se pecunias accepisse dixerunt C [ff] scripsi A^{C} (cp. Syr); ανηγαγον A^{gk} B (+ τω κρατει σου B^{pler}); suggero regi C; vobis suggessi D. [gg] + direxi potestati vestrae omnia quae gesta sunt de Iesu in praetorio meo C.

the Syriac is at such variance with the Latin (and Greek). This *could* suggest that the Syriac represents an early recension of the Letter which has not survived in Latin or Greek, but then again it may just as well be a late reworking of the Letter (compare the form in the *Cura Sanitatis Tiberii*), which found its way into Arabic and Syriac via Western missionaries.

What seems clear is that the origin of the two letters must be the same, and in conclusion it can only be said that on the whole the evidence and the likelihood points to a late Western origin for the two Syriac letters.

SEBASTIAN P. BROCK

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